



# HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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## Bureau Chief Chris Christensen Retires

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

At the end of Dec., 2008, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) Bureau Chief Chris Christensen retired from a 30-year long career with the State of Montana, having held various positions in Disaster and Emergency Services, the Board of Crime Control, and the Dept. of Corrections. Chris was a graduate of Western Montana College and retired from the National Guard as a Lt. Colonel. For the past three-and-a-half years, he served as both a Communications Manager and Bureau Chief with PSSB.

Chris took a strong leadership role in educating individuals about the Interoperability Montana (IM) Project, networking with representatives in neighboring states and Canadian provinces, and promoting the IM Project both nationally and internationally. He believed that state government should take a supporting role—rather than a controlling role—in the development and governance of interoperable communications, and he promoted the concept that decisions be made by the ultimate users of the system.

According to Scott Bradford, PSSB Communications Manager, “Chris was somebody who had a passion to help people grow in their jobs and assist them to successfully reaching their goals. He made tremendous contributions to the IM Project”.

Chris had a rousing retirement send-off in the middle of a blizzard last Dec. 29 in Helena and was suitably roasted by his employees, colleagues, friends and family. We wish him the best in the future and will miss him very much. So long!

## Draft Sustainability Plan Nears Completion

By Scott Bradford, [sbradford@mt.gov](mailto:sbradford@mt.gov)

After many months of hard work, the Interoperability Montana (IM) Governance Committee will present a comprehensive Sustainability Plan to the Interoperability Montana Project Directors (IMPD) next Tuesday, Jan. 13, as part of the project's strategic planning initiative.

This document marks an important milestone for the IM Project, and defines how the Board of Directors will pursue funding to reach IM goals. As the central business plan, it will address anticipated costs of maintenance, administration, and implementation in addition to outlining potential funding strategies to meet these needs. The plan

provides an initial approach for ensuring long-term implementation and operations.

The target for modification and approval of this document by the IMPD is February 1. Following approval, it will be presented to the Montana Legislature as part of the Interoperability Montana effort to inform legislators about the direction of the project and interoperable communications in the state. IM Governance Chair Bill Fleiner noted that it is remarkable that three different standing committees (Governance, Finance and Technical) came together to draft such a quality plan, including both a detailed five-year projected build-out and a budget.

The draft plan is available at this link: [http://interoper.mt.gov/sustainability\\_plan.mcp.x](http://interoper.mt.gov/sustainability_plan.mcp.x).

## Five-Year Budget and Build-Out Approach

By Scott Bradford, [sbradford@mt.gov](mailto:sbradford@mt.gov)

With the tireless effort of a number of members, the Interoperability Montana Finance and Technical Committees have completed both a draft five-year build-out and a five-year budget for the IM Project. These draft proposals will be submitted to the IM Project Directors (IMPD) at their January 13 meeting.

The five -year build-out plan addresses projects currently funded by the IMPD, and provides a picture of what infrastructure and trunking projects are proposed through 2013. The plan does not set firm priorities, but outlines short- and long-range needs with approximate budget requirements. It will be used as a guide for deploying regional projects, annual and long-range budgets, and pursuing funding opportunities. It has already been used to compile a five-year draft IM budget.

Once reviewed and approved, the documents also will be used to educate responders and legislative staff regarding the scope and objectives of the IM Project.

## IM Technical Committee Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

The Interoperability Montana Technical Committee (IMTC) met in Helena on Mon., Dec. 22, 2008. Chair Bob McWilliams reported on interim decision making by the IMTC Administrative Committee, indicating that technical approval was given for Northern Tier microwave MUX upgrades and cold installation of equipment at Cominco.



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Nominations and elections were held to name a new IMTC Vice-Chair and replacement member to the Administrative Committee. Lewis and Clark Radio Administrator Roger Hays was elected vice-chair and Central Montana Dispatch 9-1-1 Coordinator Dorothy Gremaux was elected as the third member of the IMTC Administrative Committee.

Sub-Committee reports were presented. Scott Bradford, Frequency Sub-Committee Chair, gave an update on Letters of Concurrence (LOCs), the frequency application process, and some interference issues. The IMTC approved naming Jack Spillman as the secondary contact for all IM frequency licenses, and suggestions were made for new members to the sub-committee. Dale Osborne updated the group about encryption and system key issues, and urged to development of a policy. Samples from other states will be solicited.

Members were updated on the IM Network. The west leg of the Northern Tier is performing well, and the new microwave monitoring software is now installed at Fort Harrison. Members also discussed data security issues.

Mark Adams, Northrop Grumman, reviewed several Decision/Information Requests (DIRs). Members approved an interim technology fix to the Timberline to High Flat microwave hop as well as a replacement of an antenna and microwave dish at Pat's Knob. Lincoln County's request for reimbursement for R56 grounding at BNSF shelters at King, Blue and Pinkham mountains was discussed and endorsed from a technical standpoint. Technical approval also was given for upgrading the electrical service at the Timberline site from 100 amps to 200 amps.

Scott Bradford and Kevin Bruski provided a summary of NEPA requests that have been submitted, and Kevin reported on some potential changes with PSIC and DHS requirements. A national subcommittee is being formed to work on this, and Kevin, along with Sheri Lanz, volunteered to assist with this issue.

The group reviewed the latest draft of the five-year build-out plan and dates for additional fleet mapping training sessions were discussed.

The IMTC will continue to meet the fourth Monday of the month. The next meeting is set for Monday, Jan. 26 at the MACo offices, Building # 1, Lower-level large conference room, 2715 Skyway Drive in Helena.

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## PSSB Offices Have Moved; New Mailing Address

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

The physical offices of the Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) have moved to Room 52 of the Mitchell Building, located at 125 North Roberts Street in Helena. In addition, our mailing address has changed to P.O. Box 200113, Helena, MT 59620-0113. Please update your contact information. Thanks.

## Upcoming Meetings

### Jan. 12

IM Finance Committee  
Helena • 9:00 am - Noon  
Anderson ZurMuehlen • 828 Great Northern Blvd.

### Jan. 12

IM Governance Committee  
Helena • 1:00 - 5:00 pm  
Dept. of Corrections Annex Conf. Rm.  
Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

### Jan. 13

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting  
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
MACo Large Conference Room, 2715 Skyway Drive

### Jan. 15 – RESCHEDULED from Jan. 8

Northern Tier Consortium (NTIC)  
Havre • 9:00 am – noon  
Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.

### Jan. 15

I-15/90 Corridor  
Butte • 10:00 am  
Butte Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.

### Jan. 21

South Central Montana Consortium (SCMIC)  
Big Timber • 10:00 am  
Carnegie Library, 314 McLeod St.

### Jan. 26

IM Technical Committee Meeting  
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
MACo Large Conference Room, 2715 Skyway Drive

### Jan. 27

Western Consortium (WICC)  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm  
Location to be Announced

### Jan. 28

Eastern Tier (ETIC)  
Glendive • 10:00 am  
Dawson County Courthouse Community Room  
207 West Bell

### Jan. 29

Big Sky 11 Consortium  
Billings • 10:00 am – noon  
Billings Fire Station #1/EOC - 2300 9th Ave N.